



PRESS RELEASE

Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation
Cincinnati Field Office
Special Agent in Charge Kathy A. Enstrom

Date: Wednesday, April 8, 2015

Contact: Craig Casserly
IRS – Criminal Investigation
401 N. Front Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 744-3130
Craig.casserly@ci.irs.gov
CI Release #: CINFO-2015-14

LOCAL WOMAN SENTENCED IN ID THEFT SCHEME

Scheme resulted in more than 500 false income tax returns being filed with IRS

COLUMBUS – Tamara Roberts, 29, of Columbus, Ohio was sentenced to 26 months in prison for wire fraud and an additional 24 months in prison for aggravated identity theft. She was also sentenced to serve three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$1,440,957 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for electronically filing more than 500 false federal income tax returns with the IRS. Approximately \$1,383,202 of the restitution will be paid jointly and severally with Jonathan Webster. Roberts previously pleaded guilty to these charges on July 29, 2014.

Carter M. Stewart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio and Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation announced the sentence handed down today by Senior U.S. District Judge George C. Smith.

According to court documents, between January 2010 and February 2013 Roberts knowingly devised a scheme to defraud the IRS by filing false income tax returns using the names and Social Security numbers of individuals without their knowledge or consent. As part of this scheme, Roberts used wire communications to electronically file more than 500 false income tax returns for the 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 income tax years, claiming at least \$1,663,503 in refunds to which she knew she was not entitled to receive.

Jonathan Webster recruited Roberts to prepare and file the false income tax returns with the IRS. Roberts used the names and Social Security numbers provided to her by Webster, which she knew were stolen.

All of the over 500 false income tax returns were filed from various locations in Columbus, Ohio. These false income tax returns contained fabricated information as it related to the taxpayer, including occupations, income amounts, and expenses. The inclusion of this false information often qualified the taxpayer listed on the income tax return to receive the Earned Income Credit.

Roberts directed the income tax refunds to be deposited into Webster's bank accounts or into bank accounts opened by third parties at Webster's direction. For the 2012 income tax year, Roberts directed the income tax refunds to be deposited into her bank account.

Roberts personally electronically filed at least 51 false income tax returns with the IRS for the 2012 tax year, and assisted in the filing of over 500 more false income tax returns with the IRS during the 2009 through 2011 tax years, all of which used stolen identities.

For the 2009 through 2012 tax years, the false income tax refunds claimed through this scheme resulted in an intended loss of \$1,663,503. For restitution purposes, the actual loss associated with this scheme is \$1,440,957.

On June 12, 2014, Jonathan Webster, 35, of Columbus, Ohio was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Michael H. Watson to 108 months in prison for wire fraud and an additional 24 months in prison for aggravated identity theft. He was also sentenced to serve three years of supervised release, and ordered to pay \$1,457,936 in restitution to the IRS for electronically filing more than 500 false federal income tax returns with the IRS.

"Tamara Roberts caused immeasurable hardship to innocent victims," said Kathy A. Enstrom, Special Agent in Charge, IRS, Criminal Investigation, Cincinnati Field Office. "Individuals who commit identity theft and refund fraud of this magnitude deserve to be punished to the fullest extent of the law."

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jessica W. Knight and was investigated by special agents of IRS-Criminal Investigation.

###